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ABSTRACT

This document examines the education of secondary level English language learners within mainstream language arts classes. It provides teachers and teacher educators with an understanding of how mainstream language arts instruction can be designed and implemented to enhance academic achievement for these students. Research for this report included an extensive search of various databases and World Wide Web sites; analysis of the national content standards documents for language arts and three other core areas; site visits to a suburban high school that used a team teaching approach to working with English language learners enrolled in mainstream classes; and personal interviews with education faculty at George Washington University who are responsible for preparing preservice teachers for secondary level mainstream instruction. After an introduction, the first section discusses making English language arts accessible to the English language learner by respecting student diversity, selecting appropriate texts, and making literature more comprehensible. The second section focuses on implementing a whole language approach. This includes encouraging students to maintain the native language and providing a balanced writing program. The third section discusses characteristics of sound assessments for English language learners. The fourth section discusses preparing mainstream teachers to work with English language learner students, examining components of an effective teacher preparation curriculum. (Contains 31 references.) (SM)

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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with contributions from Linda Mauro, Ed.D.
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Preparing Secondary Education Teachers to Work with English Language Learners:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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Overview

This document is number one of a series of four reports prepared under contract by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) in response to Task Order number D0003 for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs. In accordance with the task order requirements, this report integrates findings from research pertaining to content area instruction of linguistically and culturally diverse learners (LCDLs). Three key questions outlined in the task order are addressed:

- What does the relevant literature pertaining to content area instruction of LCDLs contribute to the theory and practice of standards for LCDLs?
- What does the relevant literature pertaining to content area instruction of LCDLs contribute to the theory and practice of measures of achievement, proficiency, and/or academic literacy for LCDLs?
- What does the relevant literature pertaining to content area instruction of LCDLs contribute to the field of promising practices in content area instruction for LCDLs?

The focus of this first report is on the education of secondary-level English language learners (ELLs) within mainstream language arts classes. The intent of this document is to give teachers and teacher educators a better understanding of how mainstream language arts instruction can be designed and implemented to enhance academic achievement for these students.

Research for the report included an extensive search of the NCBE bibliographic database, the ERIC bibliographic database and various World Wide Web sites for information regarding effective curriculum and instruction, content standards, student assessment, teacher training and education.

In addition, the national content standards documents for the language arts (*Standards for the English Language Arts*) and three other core areas (math, science, social studies) were analyzed to determine whether their theoretical bases were consistent with what educational research tells us is effective practice for ELLs.

Information was also collected through site visits[1] to a suburban high school that had implemented a team teaching approach for working with ELLs enrolled in main-

1. Site visits were conducted in May, 1997.

stream classrooms. Observations from the visit lend context to the discussion of instructional and curricular models.

Finally, personal interviews were held with education faculty at The George Washington University (GW) in Washington, DC who are responsible for preparing preservice teachers for mainstream instruction at the secondary level. Dr. Linda Mauro of GW provided valuable insights into current issues related to language arts education; her comments are interwoven throughout the report.

Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a movement to establish rigorous academic guidelines for all of our nation's schools. The idea behind these guidelines is to raise the academic tenor of schools that are more often mediocre than exemplary. At the national level, most academic fields, including English language arts, history, science, and mathematics, have issued content or curriculum standards for their respective areas. These core standards are expected to assist state and local initiatives in developing their own set of guidelines, and have influenced activity at these levels to a significant degree (Chris Green & Solis, 1997).

One of the issues state and local education agencies have wrestled with in developing standards is the extent to which linguistically and culturally diverse learners should be expected to meet the standards they have set. In mainstream American classrooms, native speakers, for whom English is nearly automatic, can focus primarily on the cognitive tasks of an academic assignment. The student who is in the process of learning English, though, must focus on both the cognitive and the linguistic — learning new information, procedures, and related tasks while also learning new vocabulary, structures and academic discourse (McKeon, 1994). Moreover, at the secondary level, ELL students only have "a window of a few years" to acquire the language ability necessary for successful academic work (Whitten, Lathrop, Hays, & Longo, 1995). Thus, setting rigorous academic standards does not guarantee that all students will have the opportunity to achieve them.

Ensuring that ELLs have equal access to challenging academic content depends, to a large extent, on the use of effective educational practices for these students *and* the existence of teachers who are well prepared to work with them. Since the majority of ELLs spend most of their time in mainstream classrooms, the responsibility for their instruction is largely up to mainstream teachers (Cornell, 1995). However, despite the fact that at least fifty percent of American teachers teach an ELL at some point in their careers, most receive little or no preparation in working with these students (McKeon,

1994). Teachers who lack the necessary training may feel resentful or even fearful of their ELL students. Secondary-level teachers are even more likely to react in such a way since they often identify themselves as content specialists and not as language teachers (Constantino, 1994). Consequently, preservice teacher education that includes training explicitly related to the education of ELLs is critical to the implementation of mainstream programs that will address their needs.

In planning sound educational programs for ELLs then, it is important to consider the implications of content standards for these students, along with the teacher behaviors and instructional approaches that will help make language and content accessible. The following section discusses these issues within the context of secondary language arts instruction. Concluding sections examine the characteristics of fair and meaningful assessment, and effective mainstream teacher preparation.

Making English Language Arts Accessible to the English Language Learner

Respect student diversity

The recently released *Standards for the English Language Arts* is among the few national content standards documents that explicitly focus on the needs of ELLs. Two of the twelve standards are directly related: one focusing on the importance of native language development, and the other promoting an understanding of, and respect for, diversity in language use. Throughout the document, the authors address issues related to the educational needs of ELLs and use vignettes of ELLs in mainstream English language arts classrooms to illustrate effective instructional settings for ELL students (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996). The authors state that the capacity to hear and respect different perspectives, and to communicate with people whose lives and cultures are different from our own, is a vital element of American society. Simply celebrating our shared beliefs and traditions is not enough; we also need to honor that which is distinctive in the many groups that make up our nation (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996).

Dr. Linda Mauro, English education professor at The George Washington University (GW), reinforces these statements in her discussion of the role minority literature can play in the lives of both native and non-native speakers. She remarks,

> I believe that adolescent literature needs to be a mirror of who they are and what they're struggling with as well as a window for understanding the world. So, I think for a second language learner ... if we deny them the opportunity to ever

read literature that is for them a mirror, we're doing them a disservice. And if we deny native speakers and native born students a chance to use literature as a window to understand other cultures and other students, we're denying them a chance to look beyond what they already know (L. Mauro, personal communication, April, 1997).

Select Appropriate Texts

The idea of giving students a chance to celebrate their diversity is related to one of the key issues in English language arts curriculum development — selection of appropriate texts. Research into reading indicates that students use past experiences and background knowledge to make sense out of unfamiliar texts. For this reason, ELLs may have difficulty with texts that are culturally unknown to them, contain difficult vocabulary and complex themes, or use academic or archaic syntax. Literature that is relevant to the life experiences and cultures of ELL students, including folktales or myths from their first culture, can facilitate cognitive and language development. Short stories written by minority authors, such as William Saroyan, Sandra Cisneros and Amy Tan, are also beneficial because they tend to contain themes and characters with which students from the respective cultures of these authors are familiar. Moreover, these works allow students from the majority culture the opportunity to learn from perspectives that may differ from their own (Sasser, 1992).

Selecting texts that are relevant to the life experiences and cultures of ELL students can facilitate cognitive and language development.

The middle school vignette (Vignette I: Using Folktales in the Language Arts) from the *Standards for the English Language Arts* demonstrates how ELLs are integrated into the language arts classroom through the use of culturally familiar materials, and through instructional methods that facilitate language and cognitive development. The vignette also acknowledges the important role of families in children's learning.

Make Literature More Comprehensible

A second emphasis of the language arts standards is to give students the tools to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate a wide range of texts (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996). To help ELLs meet this goal, teachers are encouraged to adopt instructional approaches which help make literary material more comprehensible to these students and actively teach strategies that will support them in their endeavors to unlock meaning in works of literature.

Vignette

I. Using Folktales in the Language Arts

Middle school students who are originally from a dozen different countries are studying folktales using resources in English and, when available, in their primary languages. Many sources come from their classroom, school, and public libraries, but some, especially those written in the students' primary languages, come from their homes. The students keep reflective reading journals and share responses to folktales they have read in small groups. As a class, the students read selected folktales together and watch videotaped dramatizations of several stories made by previous classes. Watching these tapes excites the students as they see stories from many different cultures being brought to life by their peers. Their teacher models different storytelling techniques, including puppetry, readers' theater, and role-playing.

After a week of reading a number of different stories, the students each select one special story to present to the class. Each student chooses the mode of storytelling that is best suited to his or her story, including staging a story as a mini-drama, drawing a picture, or creating puppets to represent key characters. Students then practice in small groups, and finally they present their folktales to the class. The teacher videotapes each presentation so that students can watch and critique their own presentations later. The videotape will also provide a model for students in next year's class.

As a further exploration of narrative, students ask their parents or caregivers to tell them stories from their own cultures. Working together, students and their parents write out these stories. In many cases, students write the stories both in their first language and in English. The students work in groups to assemble all of these stories and create a book using the class computer. This book is duplicated so that each student has a copy. A copy is also donated to the school library so that other students may enjoy the stories and see different styles of writing from around the world (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 1996).

Sasser (1992) suggests a number of tools teachers can use to make literature more understandable. For example, graphic organizers — clusters, semantic maps, storyboards, matrices, semantic webs, and Venn diagrams — can help students visualize and organize thematic content and characters and keep abreast of plot developments. Through the process of listing, sorting, and evaluating information, students become involved in responding critically to the work they are reading. In addition, graphic organizers force students to reformulate abstract information from the text into a concrete form. Such activities aid students in comprehending and expressing difficult ideas. Sasser (1992) also recommends that students keep journal entries about the literature they read, and interact with their peers orally and in writing. Together,

these activities give ELLs the extra support needed for successful academic experiences with literature.

Implement a Whole Language Approach

The whole language philosophy and the teaching/learning techniques associated with it closely conform to what is known about effective instruction for ELLs (Kauffman et al., 1995). Whole language approaches, which view meaning and natural language as the foundations for literacy development, are particularly well-suited to language arts classrooms where students are actively involved in constructing meaning from their own experiences and through encounters with various texts. The description in Vignette II of a whole-language unit on *To Kill a Mockingbird* was developed collaboratively by ESL and English literature teachers for use in coordinated ESL and mainstream literature classes. Throughout the unit, students are asked to consider the themes of love and conflict, the individual and society, blindness and sight, and passages and transformations. The unit is presented in three stages called INTO, THROUGH, and BEYOND.

Encourage collaboration among Language Arts and ESL/bilingual teachers to design whole-language units and lessons for ELLs.

Sasser (1992) describes the INTO stage as what occurs before reading begins. The purpose here, particularly for ELLs, is to interest the students in the text and elicit prior knowledge that may be useful in interpreting the work. Anticipation guides, often composed of simple true-false or agree-disagree statements, encourage students to identify and think through their positions on ideas prevalent in the literary work. The teacher can also introduce the reading through simulation activities like the one described above, or by eliciting predictions from the students about the content and outcome of the work.

During the THROUGH phase, students either read the text silently, or listen to the teacher reading selected portions of the work aloud. By hearing the text, ELLs get a better sense of inflection, pronunciation, rhythm and stress, which can aid in understanding. ELLs can also develop the skills necessary for comprehension of a complex work of literature — following a sequence of events, identifying foreshadowing and flashback, visualizing setting, analyzing character and motive, comprehending mood and theme, and recognizing irony and symbols — by taking part in oral or written discussions and activities. As classmates share their sometimes very different interpretations of a text, those who come from educational systems that stress only one right

Vignette

II. To Kill a Mockingbird

In the first stage (INTO), students read and discuss poems about truth and short stories such as, *A Death in the House* by C. Simak. Following the discussion, students participate in a simulation exercise dealing with segregation. Students are divided into pairs with one member considered a first-class citizen (white) and the other a second-class citizen (black). Pairs work together to find and write definitions for assigned words, identify suffixes, locate sentences in the text in which the words are used, and present the information to the class for discussion. Only the first-class citizen of the pair may present information, receive credit and be rewarded for their efforts. The second-class citizen, on the other hand, is expected to assist in completing the vocabulary activity and perform tasks involving physical labor (getting and returning the dictionary). At no point are any second-class citizens' efforts recognized or rewarded. At the conclusion, students discuss how they felt during the simulation and use the phrases, "I noticed," or "I learned." This activity is followed by viewing and discussing the film, *Amazing Grace*.

In THROUGH, students complete daily writing activities, study questions and vocabulary development activities to better understand the novel. In one activity, students read a chapter or scene and choose a quote to represent it. Next, they illustrate the quote to depict its significance. Later, students share their illustrations with the class and consider new perspectives for interpreting the chapters or scenes.

In BEYOND, students listen to and discuss the song, *The Way It Is*, by Bruce Hornsby. They then brainstorm criteria for a good novel and evaluate the book based on these criteria. At the end of the unit, they take an objective test (Kauffman et al., 1995).

answer begin to realize the possibility for multiple viewpoints. In addition, the use of graphic organizers, as previously mentioned, becomes important as students grapple with the complexities of theme, character, and plot.

The BEYOND stage involves students in activities that refine their thoughts and deepen their comprehension of a text. Comparing a book with its film version, conducting research on issues raised from reading or discussion, or responding through poetry or song are examples of how teachers can further student involvement with a literary work.

Encourage Students to Maintain the Native Language

A key focus of the English language arts standards is on maintaining the native language of ELL students. Authors of the standards documents assert that students should make use of their first language not just in language arts classes, but in all content area instruction. Providing opportunities for native language use has been found to

have a positive effect on the academic success of ELL students in predominantly English-medium settings (Tikunoff et al., 1991).

The opportunity for native language use is among the major instructional features affecting the academic success of ELL students.

For monolingual English teachers or those teachers who do not speak all the languages of their students, Tikunoff et al. (1991) outline several ways to facilitate native language use. These include utilizing the services of aides or tutors fluent in the native languages of the students to assist in explaining content materials, and allowing students to respond in their native language to questions asked in English. In addition, native language books, magazines, films, or other materials relating to the topic or theme of a lesson support native language development when other resources are not available. Lucas and Katz (1994) suggest that students who are not proficient in English can keep reading logs or journals in their native languages. Teachers can also utilize their students' linguistic resources by pairing students with the same native language, but different levels of English proficiency, so that

Vignette

III. Native Language Peer Tutoring

The teacher sets out the steps for the day's lesson on the process of writing a family history. The class, a heterogeneous grouping of middle school students whose native languages are Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean, watch quietly and attentively as Norma (the teacher) brainstorms the topic, scribbling notes about her family history on the overhead projector as a model of how this prewriting technique can help them begin exploration of this topic. Next, Norma turns to the chalkboard, writing her first draft as she explains the students' task. When she is done, students turn to each other at their tables to exchange ideas for their own family histories. After about five minutes, Ana leans over Rosa's paper, which is already three-quarters filled with writing in Spanish and English. Rosa has only been in the program for one month and Norma describes her level of English as low intermediate. Ana, on the other hand, has high-intermediate English skills. Norma has carefully constructed students' groups to make sure each contains students with different skill levels so that students can help each other in either English or their native languages. Her brow furrowed, Rosa consults with Ana, discussing what is on the sheet and what still needs to be added. She speaks quickly and quietly in Spanish, an occasional word from the sheet in English breaking the flow (Lucas & Katz, 1994).

more proficient students can tutor those less proficient. The third vignette (Native Language Peer Tutoring) is an example of this kind of peer tutoring arrangement.

Provide a Balanced Writing Program

Several of the language arts standards emphasize the importance of writing as a process and as a means of authentic communication. Equally important is a balanced writing program that promotes the combined goals of fluency, clarity and correctness. Dr. Mauro cautions,

> If students can write correctly, but it's not clear and they aren't able to convey their meaning, that does students a disservice. There has been too much of a focus, in the previous generation, on correctness, and too much focus more recently on fluency by teachers who misunderstood the notion of the writing process (L. Mauro, personal communication, April, 1997).

A balanced approach to writing would include meaningful assignments that help students work together to organize their own writing, and support one another's writing development. Vignette IV, a lesson on persuasive writing, is an example of this type of assignment.

Vignette

IV. Teaching Persuasive Writing

The class meets to select a topic that almost everyone is interested in, such as capital punishment. Students then discuss the topic, sharing cultural and religious views. The class also spends time reading various materials on capital punishment that are appropriate for their reading level; native language materials could be used if available. After completing initial research on the topic, students must give two reasons why they might be in support of the death penalty and two reasons why they might be against it. Next, they choose sides, identifying which side they have chosen with a tag. Each student visits two other students who support their own opinion, then two who are opposed to their opinion. They use a simple form to record their own responses, the responses of those who agree with them, and the responses of those who disagree. This process involves students in talking through other people's ideas in a respectful way. Learning how to structure a clear, well-organized persuasive essay is the next step. Using their own ideas and those they gathered from others, they are taught how to express their own and their opponents' beliefs, using phrases such as, "Although some people may believe," and similar expressions. This activity teaches clarity in a setting where students are encouraged to talk and share with one another and requires that students build on the ideas of others (L. Mauro, personal communication, April, 1997).

Characteristics of Sound Assessment for ELLs

When assessing ELLs, teachers need to ask whether they are measuring language proficiency or content knowledge.

To raise the quality of mainstream instruction for ELLs, authentic and meaningful instruction should be combined with authentic and meaningful assessment. August and Pease-Alvarez (1996), in their study of effective programs and classrooms for English language learners, list five attributes of a good assessment plan. A first concern is that ELL students be assessed for both content knowledge and language proficiency. Secondly, whenever possible and appropriate, schools should make efforts to assess students' content knowledge and abilities in the native language as well as in English. Native language assessment is particularly important when students have learned certain content concepts and skills in their native language. Without such assessment, teachers are likely to underestimate students' academic achievement. A third characteristic of sound assessment practice entails using a diversity of measures, e.g., portfolios, observations, anecdotal records, interviews, checklists, and criterion-referenced tests, to measure content knowledge and skills. A diversified approach to assessment allows the teacher to incorporate information about ELLs in a variety of contexts obtained from a variety of sources through a variety of procedures. A fourth attribute concerns teacher awareness of the purpose of the assessment, e.g., Is the test intended to measure verbal or writing skills, language proficiency or content knowledge? Finally, understanding of a student's background, including their educational experiences and parents' literacy, contribute to a more complete assessment picture.

Many of the attributes listed by August and Pease-Alvarez (1996) are reflected in the performance assessment criteria developed by local schools and districts. These criteria, described in the *Guide to Performance Assessment for Linguistically Diverse Students* (Navarrete & Gustkee, 1996), include the following:

- **Add context to assessment tasks** by (a) incorporating familiar classroom material as a stimulus, such as brief quotations, charts, graphics, cartoons, and works of art; (b) including questions for small group discussion and individual writing; (c) and mirroring learning processes with which students are familiar, such as the writing process and reading conferencing activities.

- **Use alternative assessment procedures**, such as teachers' observations, student's' self-appraisals and parents' observations of their child's progress.

- **Design alternative assessment tasks**, including exhibits, dramatic renditions, interviews, and writing samples.

The *Guide* also recommends a number of specific techniques for improving assessment of ELLs in content area settings, such as:

- allowing extra time to complete or respond to assessment tasks;

- designing administration procedures to match classroom instructional practices, e.g., cooperative small groups, individual conferences, and assessment in the language of instruction;

- simplifying directions in English and/or paraphrasing in the student's native language; and

- permitting students to use dictionaries or word lists.

More and more often, school districts committed to meeting the needs of diverse learners are turning to alternative assessment — assessment that requires students to perform authentic academic tasks, similar to those originally used to teach the material. For example, students may be asked to complete an oral history project, role-play a job interview, create a science exhibit, or develop a class newspaper. Such assessment is continuous, allowing the teacher to track student growth throughout the school year. Typically, student responses to alternative assessment tasks are organized in a portfolio. Periodically, teachers and students discuss which samples of student work should be included in the portfolio, and which should also contain teacher rating forms, checklists, observation notes and other information concerning student progress toward meeting instructional objectives (Chamot, 1993).

Alternative assessment practices, including portfolios, can be useful both for teacher appraisal of student work and for student self-appraisal.

Alternative assessment practices are recommended to students in the language arts teacher preparation program at The George Washington University. Preservice teachers are encouraged to use such alternative methods as oral tests, storytelling and

project-oriented assessment with both native and nonnative speakers. It is also recommended that students be given the opportunity to select which assessment tasks to include in their portfolios, and to characterize their own growth as a writer (L. Mauro, personal communication, April, 1997).

Preparing Mainstream Teachers to Work with ELL Students

The final and most important link in effective mainstream instruction of ELL students is the mainstream teacher. Research by Castaneda (1993) suggests that mainstream teachers who receive appropriate training in how to teach ELLs are able to create instructional environments supportive of second language and content learning. Castaneda found, for example, that training in cooperative grouping strategies, sheltered ESL approaches, and ways to promote collaboration between mainstream and bilingual staff were helpful to the mainstream teachers involved in her study.

Teacher education is the key to improving mainstream instruction of ELL students.

Enhancing the instructional competencies of mainstream teachers was one of the goals of a training program initiated in the Chicago Public Schools (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). The intent of the program was to improve collaboration among teachers working with diverse learners. Training topics emphasized by the Chicago program (listed below) indicate some of the issues for teacher education programs to consider.

Issues Mainstream Teacher Education Programs Need to Address

- ✓ Adapting mainstream lessons and materials to meet the needs of ELL students;
- ✓ assessing and grading ELL students;
- ✓ distinguishing between language difficulties and learning problems;
- ✓ incorporating ESL methods into the mainstream classroom;
- ✓ making academic English more comprehensible by teaching specific learning strategies;
- ✓ managing multi-language level classrooms;
- ✓ using cooperative learning strategies to encourage interaction between ELL and native English speaking students; and
- ✓ working with teaching assistants (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

Vignette

V. Teacher Education in Practice

Students are asked to write on an assigned topic, a topic that is not familiar to them. They are told by the professor (Dr. Mauro) that she is tired of receiving sloppy, incoherent writing, and that they have 20 minutes to compose a well-written paragraph. Since, she continues, they have not been following the rules of the English language, simple rules they should know by now, she will review them. On the board, she gives them a number of (non-English) rules, such as making sure that adjectives follow nouns and various methods of forming the past tense. She then reiterates that they have 20 minutes to write their paragraphs. As they write, she circulates, hovering over each of them. What students discover from this exercise is that they are almost incapable of writing with any meaning when (a) they do not understand what they are writing about, and (b) they are trying to write according to rules that are unfamiliar to them (L. Mauro, personal communication, April, 1997).

Despite the recognition that training can help mainstream teachers who are unprepared to work with ELLs, most education departments have not incorporated relevant coursework into their programs. This is largely due to the prevailing attitude that teaching language is the responsibility of the ESL or bilingual teacher, and that ELL students who enter the mainstream classroom should be ready to learn academic content in English. Moreover, very little research has been done to assist teacher educators in preparing secondary teachers to work with ELL students in their classrooms (Constantino, 1994).

There are some education departments, though, designed to give preservice teachers insight into the educational needs of mainstreamed second language learners. Student teachers in GW's Language Arts program, for instance, participate in Vignette V's innovative activity that helps them to understand the difficulties of learning in a second language

Components of an Effective Teacher Preparation Curriculum

No longer do teachers face classrooms composed mainly of white, middle-class, English speaking students, and teacher education programs need to reflect this reality. What is needed is a curriculum in which all aspects of the education program — coursework and field experiences — involve preservice teachers in developing the skills and knowledge necessary for successful practice in diverse classrooms (Chisholm, 1994). An effective curriculum would provide preservice teachers with the following:

- a repertoire of methods and skills for adapting instruction to the needs of ELL students;

- alternative strategies for assessing student progress;
- a sound basis in testing methods, interpretation of test results, and ethnographic and observational techniques;
- ability to recognize cultural bias in tests and to use valid and culturally sensitive assessment measures;
- proficiency in assessing software for the accuracy of its cultural content as well as for its educational merit;
- ways to incorporate differences in cognitive and learning style into classroom instruction;
- understanding of cultural differences; and
- information on the contributions of linguistically and culturally diverse peoples to the content areas (Chisholm, 1994).

Chisholm (1994) adds that an integral component of any teacher education program is the quality of its field experiences. Education programs serious about training teachers to work with ELL students must provide them with practical experiences that allow them to observe effective teachers and to practice teaching in multilingual environments. Productive field experiences also give preservice teachers ample opportunities to reflect with their peers and collaborating teachers on their developing skills and cultural competencies.

Conclusion

The new language arts content standards serve as a challenge — and a reminder — to teacher educators. If we are to meet our goal of quality education for all students, then we need to develop teacher education programs that take into account the characteristics of an increasingly diverse student population. Not just a few, but all teachers need to have the knowledge and understanding to educate culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Preservice programs that are up to the task of preparing teachers to work effectively with these learners will go beyond the addition of one or two special courses, and develop a comprehensive curriculum that instills in our future teachers both an appreciation of diversity, and the capacity to address the different needs of their students.

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